

Physiologist Led Valve Clinic

Cardiology



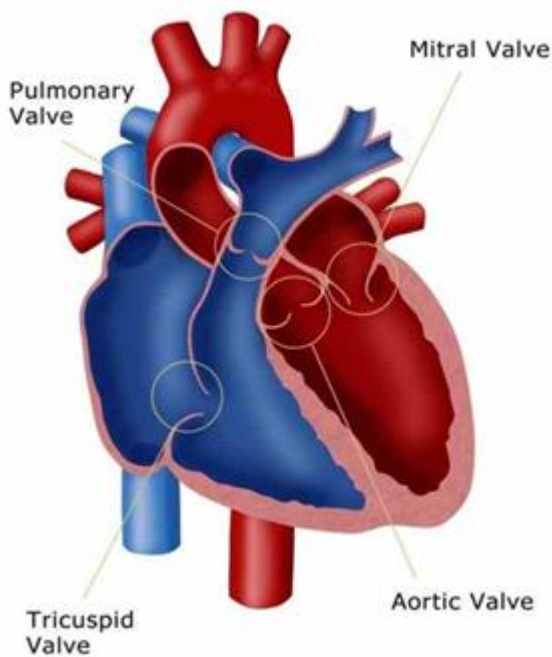
What is the physiologist led valve clinic?

You would have been referred into this clinic by your consultant cardiologist as one or more of your heart valves do not work like they should. At each clinic appointment you will be reviewed by a highly specialised echophysiologist who will ask you about your symptoms, perform a clinical assessment, electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood pressure recording. An echocardiogram will then be performed. Before you leave the clinic, you will be informed of the outcome.

What do heart valves do?

Your blood flows around your heart and the rest of your body in one direction, like a one-way traffic system. Your heart valves control the direction of your blood flow. They have very small flaps of skin called leaflets (sometimes called cusps) that open and close like doors with every heartbeat – that's 1000,000 times a day! They stop the blood flowing backwards.

There are four valves in your heart, they are:



What is heart valve disease?

Heart valve disease is when one or more of your heart valves don't work like they should. There are several types of heart valve disease. The main problems are caused by the valve not opening fully or the valve not closing properly: If the valve doesn't open fully, it will block or restrict the flow of blood. This is called valve stenosis or valve narrowing.

If the valve doesn't close fully, the blood will leak back into the heart instead of forwards into the body. This is called valve incompetence, valve regurgitation or a leaky valve.

These problems can put extra strain on your heart and make your heart work harder. This can cause you to have symptoms like feeling more tired and out of breath.

What causes heart valve disease?

The main causes of heart valve disease are:

- being born with an abnormal valve or valves (congenital heart disease)
- having had rheumatic fever
- cardiomyopathy - a disease of the heart muscle

- damage to the heart muscle from a heart attack
- getting older
- a previous infection with endocarditis

What are the symptoms of heart valve disease?

Some people with heart valve disease don't have any symptoms, other people can have multiple symptoms. There is no link between how serious your heart valve disease is and how many symptoms you feel or how serious your symptoms are. You can have serious symptoms and mild heart valve disease or the opposite, everyone's symptoms are different.

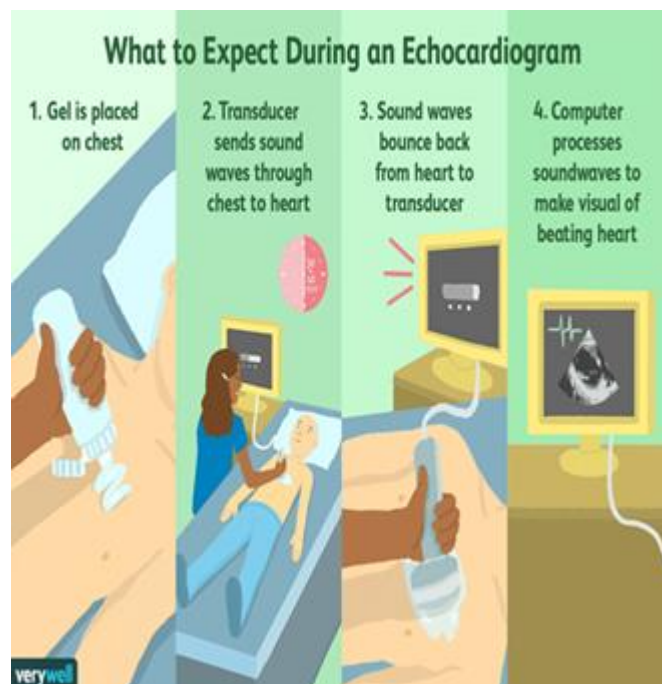
Some of the common symptoms are:

- shortness of breath and being breathless
- feeling weak or dizzy
- discomfort in your chest
- swollen ankles and feet
- being unusually tired
- Palpitations (a fluttering or pounding feeling in your chest or neck)

Further follow-ups

Your follow-up appointment will be arranged in line with the guidelines on valve disease and an appointment letter will be sent nearer the date.

Please bring with you your current medication list and wear comfortable clothes that are easy to change in and out of. Expect to spend over 1 hour within the cardiology department on the day of your appointment



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